

Suffering Motif in the Epistle to the Hebrews

Andresito P. Fernando

Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

The rising popularity of prosperity gospel among many Christian circles tends to obscure the question on the reality of suffering in Christian experience. Prosperity theologians claim that those who accepted the Gospel would always experience affluent life. The inconsistency between the prosperity theology and the presence of hardships in Christian life calls for a reevaluation of the theme of suffering based on biblical viewpoint. The suffering motif is deeply embedded in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The book of Hebrews presupposes the reality of suffering and offers key answers on why Christians experience hardships in life even though they are faithful to God. With this perspective in mind, this paper examines a major issue in the Epistle to the Hebrews; How does the book of Hebrews explain the presence and purpose of suffering in Christian life? Using the synthetic approach, this paper found that the presence of sufferings is an integral part of Christian life and in line with the Divine plan. Sufferings function as prophylactic against spiritual laxness and apostasy and motivate believers for further endurance and faithfulness. They escalate the anticipation of the promised eschatological reward. Thus, Christians should have a healthy and positive outlook in the midst of their suffering experiences.

Keywords: *prosperity gospel, suffering, endurance, faithfulness, eschatological reward*